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AUTHOR	Preston, Debra S.
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ABSTRACT

With the many layoffs and downsizing of companies during the 1990s, many displaced workers have turned to temporary employment to earn a living while looking for permanent employment. Others have adopted "temping" as a more long-term work style. Although it may not be possible to predict whether an individual will find satisfaction or dissatisfaction with temporary work, it may be possible to use the McDaniels Career Transition Considerations (Modified) form to assist an individual in exploring his/her reasons for entering the temp world of work. This form was originally designed for clinical use with persons contemplating a career transition, and it has been specifically modified to address temporary workers. The form consists of nine scales measuring factors of health, finances, family, place of residence, work options, leisure options, personal issues, networking issues, and other issues. These factors were identified by Sacco (1994) as important to today's temporary work force. Counselors should instruct clients to rank order the factors in order of importance in transition. The counselor should then interpret the probable impact that temporary work will have on the salient factors. The form is a non-standardized instrument. It has been used to investigate the planning of persons seeking temporary work, with the findings suggesting that people seek temporary work as a result of transitions, work options, and family issues, and that temporary workers who were better planners in the transition experienced more job satisfaction. (Contains 15 references.) (KC)

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Debra S. Preston

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Using the McDaniels Career Transitions Considerations (1991) (modified) Form with Potential Temporary Employees

by Debra S. Preston

Restructuring, downsizing, rightsizing, trimming the fat--these terms became buzz words for the 1990's. Whatever the euphemism, the bottom line was that millions of people were unemployed or underemployed. The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (1992) reported that, in the recession of 1990, over 9 million people became unemployed. BLS projected that only a small number of those who lost jobs in the recent recession was rehired by their former employers (Gardner, 1994).

One avenue explored by many former permanent employees was temporary work which was defined by Polivka and Nardone (1989) as flexible work arrangements that do not involve full-time wage and salary workers. Increasingly, employees who formerly held permanent jobs were seeking temporary work. Temping was a viable option for those seeking permanent positions. Temps learned about internal job openings and made business contacts while they simultaneously conducted a job search and earned an income (Ryan, 1991). When temp jobs became permanent positions, temps served as candidates whose performance had already been tested (Falcone, 1993).

Consider these two scenarios of modern employment:

My wife accepted a promotion, which made it necessary for us to move to another state. My wife is an executive, and I'm a factory worker. I temped at industrial jobs for eight months until I finally found another job.

I have two college degrees and a good track record. I was really secure. Then my

company started trimming the fat--and I was considered excess baggage. I ended up temping for almost a year, and eventually accepted a position offered to me while on a temporary assignment. (Mendenhall, 1993, p. 15)

Both of these workers were in what Schlossberg (1984; 1996) called a career transition. Career transitions are either planned, as in the case of a promotion, or unplanned, as in the case of a layoff. Bridges (1980) noted that how individuals handled their career transitions influenced their lives for many years. Many individuals adapted to job transitions by becoming temporary workers or "temps." The National Association of Temporary Services (NATS) reported that every day over one million people worked as temps (Sacco, 1992). Contributing to the growth of the temporary work industry was an increase in the use of temps as adjunct workers by companies who sought to reduce personnel costs, gauge personnel needs, and screen potential new employees (Sacco, 1993). Naisbitt (1984) noted that from the 1980s to the year 2000 there was a social reevaluation of the contributions of permanent jobs to their organizations. Naisbitt (1990) predicted that this reevaluation resulted in 10 million workers serving as leased employees by the year 2000.

Some temps reported more job satisfaction with their employment choices than others. For example, take the following two statements into consideration:

I never, ever dreamed I would resign from a very well paying, secure job with great benefits simply because I didn't want to work there anymore and I wanted to do something different. But at the age of thirty-nine that is exactly what I did...I turned in my resignation, tightened my belt, made some adjustments and went through with my plans. (Mendenhall, 1993, p. 14)

> I'm the type of person that if I do a job, I want to do it. And I want to be challenged. So all of these assignments have been really sort of easy for me. But I try not to let that bother me because I know it's not something I'm going to stay with. (Henson, 1993, p. 180)

So, who will thrive in temporary work and who will not? It may not be possible to predict if an individual will find satisfaction or dissatisfaction with temporary work but it may be possible to assist an individual in exploring their reasons for entering the temp world of work.

McDaniels Career Transition Considerations (Modified) (1991) form

McDaniels Career Transition Considerations (Modified) (1991) form. This form was originally designed for clinical use with individuals contemplating a career transition. This form has been modified to specifically addresses temporary workers. The form consists of nine scales measuring factors of: (a) health, (b) finances, (c) family, (d) place of residence, (e) work options, (f) leisure options, (g) personal issues, (h) networking issues, and (i) other issues. These factors were identified by Sacco (1994) as important to today's temporary workforce.

To administer the form, the counselor should instruct the client to indicate estimates of transition consideration on a rating scale with anchors at 0 (very little), 25 (little), 50 (somewhat), 75 (much), and 100 (very much). Clients should then be requested to rank order the factors in order of importance, with one (1) indicating most important, to nine (9) indicating least important. Respondents could also record zero (0) to indicate that the respondent did not consider the factor to have any significance in regard to the transition.

To interpret the form, the counselor should first review and summarize the client's responses paying particular attention to the factors that the client indicates are most salient to him

or her. Next, the counselor should facilitate an exploration of the probable impact that temporary work will have on the salient factors. An excerpt of a counselor-client discussion is as follows:

Counselor: In reviewing your responses, it appears that family and finances are two factors that you're giving great thought as you weigh the pros and cons of temporary work.

Client: Yes, I just graduated from college and I am expecting a baby in seven months.

Counselor: It sounds like you're experiencing two transitions: going from school to work and beginning a family.

Client: Yes, I don't really want to work full-time at this point but my husband and I do have a great deal of debt.

Counselor: What might be the benefits of temping?

Client: I imagine I can obtain a site relatively quickly and not have to worry about giving a lot of notice.

Counselor: What might be some of the drawbacks?

Client: I don't expect to get paid as much as I could with a permanent job and I will not get benefits.

Counselor: Given that you will probably find a paying situation quickly but not with the pay and benefits of a full-time job, what do you think is a viable plan of action for you?

Client: I think I will further explore a temp position. I can change my mind later if it doesn't work.

The MCTC (modified) form is a non-standardized instrument. Preston (1995) used the tool to investigate the effect of planfulness on the job satisfaction of workers in a *temp pool* at a large university. She found that finances was determined to be the primary consideration of

those seeking temporary work followed by work options and family issues. Results suggest that the more planful respondents experienced more satisfaction. The findings suggest that individuals sought temporary work as a result of a transition as defined by Schlossberg (1984; 1996); specifically, in regards to adjusting to role change salience. Temporary workers were planful in the transition which resulted in experiencing job satisfaction.

More research is needed to explore the utility of this instrument with various populations. Individuals concerned with such issues as finances, work options, and family issues while in a career transition may find satisfaction in temporary work. The McDaniels Career Transition Considerations(modified)(1991) form may be an effective instrument to helping clients determine if temping is a lucrative option worth exploring.

Debra S. Preston is assistant professor and School Counseling Program Coordinator at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

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